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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH
COMPREHENSIVE STATE FORESTRY PLANNING

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It's great to be back in Michigan, especially during Natural Resources Days. And I can think of no more important subject to discuss with you than that which you have assigned me--preparing for the future through comprehensive state forestry planning.

First, I want you to know that I am very proud of the leadership and the progress that you are making here in my home state. A few weeks ago Hank Webster, Jerry Rose, and Bob Manthy came to Washington to meet with our USDA Forestry Planning Committee. They reported excellent progress in efforts to develop a Michigan forest resource assessment and program. Our USDA committee, which includes six agencies with responsibilities for private forest lands, was impressed by what it heard. Forest Service Chief John McGuire and I were delighted to find out how far you have come in getting Michigan's forestry act together.

Direction, maturity, and an even-handed approach are evident in Michigan forestry planning. Only about 10 years ago people were going off in all directions. Everyone had his own agenda. No one much cared what the other was doing--unless some action crossed over the boundaries of a special interest or a jurisdictional turf that "needed" to be protected. Slowly but surely consensus and teamwork are replacing extremism and functionalism.

Remarks prepared for delivery by Dr. M. Rupert Cutler, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Conservation, Research, and Education, before a conference on Michigan's Forest Resources Plan: A State Report, at Michigan State University's Natural Resources Days, East Lansing, Michigan, March 20, 1979, 10:15 a.m.

A pattern is increasingly apparent. First, we see a gradual awareness that resource-related problems are getting more complex--so much so that no one individual or group can be successful through unilateral action. Second, in an era of increasingly tight budgets and personnel ceilings, it is becoming clear that no one group or agency can grow rapidly--even to fill a vacuum should one exist.

Edward R. Murrow once said that the obscure we see eventually; the completely apparent takes a little longer. As a group we are just beginning to recognize the "completely apparent:" that there is more to be done in forestry and renewable resources that can be achieved by all of the parties concerned, working more than full time, without overlap or competition.

Third, the theoretical and abstract debates of 10 years ago over principles and generalities have been replaced by urgent, complex, and real local problems affecting the lives of our citizens.

Our only chance to avoid being overwhelmed by the onslaught of emerging problems is through cooperation and coordination. We must achieve the inter-agency synergism that is so effective, and so exciting, when it happens.

Even if I were without roots here in Michigan, I would be very proud--as a professional and as a concerned citizen--of what is happening here. Your example and your leadership can stimulate efforts elsewhere.

Michigan is in a good position to demonstrate a holistic approach to resource planning and management. Michigan has a wide assortment of resources and a full range of pressures on those resources. Your 19 million acres of forest land span the extremes of dense timberlands in the upper peninsula to scattered woodlands in the southern tier to the green areas of your cities. Ranking seventh among the states in population and seventh in economy, there are ample opportunities for interface between your people and natural resources.

You have more snowmobiles than any other state and the second largest number of motorcycles--no small challenge for your lands and forest environment! The internal combustion engine and the pine tree are symbols of a great

No state has a better mixture of federal, state, industrial, and private ownership of forest land to work with. Few states have a better legacy of concern about conservation-- or a stronger record of economic development. The wide range of fish and wildlife species, of forest conditions, and of recreation opportunities is matched by the diversity of uses and pressures on these lands and resources.

You have a strong foundation of know-how and leadership in your universities to address concerns about natural resources.

State forestry planning is a timely subject. Although foresters have been making plans for a long time, there has never been a better time for comprehensive statewide attention to forests and related resources.

o Pressures on our lands and forests have never been more obvious--and more insidious.

o Tradeoffs between environmental and economic needs are difficult. Regional development must take place in an atmosphere of concern for the environment.

o The complexity of issues demands unprecedented clarity and precision in decisionmaking.

o The rate of change is so rapid that the range of our foresight is sharply reduced.

o The need for public involvement can no longer be denied.

o The American lifestyle has never been so threatened.

o The conservation ethic has never been more needed--or more appropriate.

o Public dissatisfaction with shortsighted, purposeless, unordered management by crisis has never been more acute.

o Imaginative, innovative solutions to problems--both old and new--have never been more imperative.

What we need now is leadership by professionals, decisionmaking based on logic and facts, targeting efforts toward accomplishing high-priority goals. And this is what we seek.

The Statewide Forest Resources Plan you are building can be many things to many people. It can be a strategy--a framework--a process--a guide to action--a blueprint for today and tomorrow--a consensus--a living document of decision--a problem-solving mechanism--a vehicle for coordination and cooperation--a means of public involvement and education--a budget tool--a policy statement--a commitment to the present and a promise to the future. Yes, it can be all of this and more--you can write your own ticket.

Let's talk about where the federal government fits into this. The Department of Agriculture knows that the real strength of government is at the local level. We have no sympathy with those who think Washington should call all the shots--when it comes to forest resource planning or anything else. Any forestry plan that involves the lands, and resources, and lives of the people must reflect the objectives and needs of those people. The landowners themselves, the users of the lands and resources, and the people who live in and near the forests must have a voice in shaping their own destiny. Keeping that principle firmly in mind, what can you expect of the federal agencies in this effort? Let me suggest a few dimensions of that federal role as we see it.

First, leadership--setting an example--motivating and encouraging through incentives--providing information, technical know-how, and financial resources; let me give some examples.

The Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 provides long-needed Congressional authorization and direction to create better public understanding of natural resources. Under the leadership of "Pete" Petoskey, who started work March 12 on my staff, we can expect to see strong implementation of that law.

Management of federal lands can be an excellent demonstration of the kind of forest resource planning I have outlined for you. National Forest Management Act-based plans and the RARE II process illustrate forest resource planning on Federal lands.

Federal lands can serve as a "lightning rod" to focus resource management issues; trigger policy development; and resolve critical problems of tradeoffs between economic and environmental concerns. Integrated Pest Management; forestry use of herbicides in Oregon's National Forests; wilderness vs. development conflicts in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of Minnesota; management of endangered species habitat; size of clearcut areas; overgrazing by livestock: these and many other resource management issues are addressed and resolved on the federal lands.

Another key federal role is to be a catalyst--the promoter and instigator of action. There are countless examples. One of the oldest is the development of strong state forest fire control organizations that grew out of the 1924 Clarke-McNary Law. One of the newest is USDA's loan-guarantee program to encourage the conversion to energy fuels of wood and other agricultural products.

Federal agencies also can play a key facilitating role. Through technical and financial assistance they can make things happen at the state and local level. Our cooperative forestry assistance programs have helped make possible the development of the excellent state forestry plan emerging here in Michigan. The planning job probably would have been done anyway--but it will be done faster and better because of USDA involvement. Another illustration is the prime forest land project now under way in the upper peninsula. This project depends on assistance from both the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service of USDA. I strongly support this cooperative project.

There is still another dimension of the federal role--advocacy. Retention of prime agricultural and forest land is the subject of a recent policy memorandum from Secretary Bergland. We believe that USDA must be a strong advocate of wise land use and protection of the great productive land base of this country.

Of course, EPA and the 208 process are further illustrations of a federal advocacy role--in water quality planning. USDA's Rural Clean Water Program will help implement those plans.

Perhaps one of the most important federal roles in resource planning is to set a national and regional planning framework to provide the states with perspective. No state can plan effectively in a vacuum. Congress has recognized this truism three times in recent years with regard to natural resources: with the Forest and Rangelands Renewable Resources Planning Act in 1974, the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act in 1977, and with the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978.

These laws give the Department of Agriculture major responsibility in situation assessment and program planning. All three planning efforts require public involvement in decisionmaking. Our performance can only be as good as the cooperation and input that we get from state and local interests.

I am confident that the RPA/RCA/RREA processes will produce some definitive analyses of the renewable resources situation and remedies for the problems uncovered. The projections of supply and demand alone will provide a necessary backdrop for state-by-state analyses and planning. Let me give you one illustration that is fresh in my mind.

During the last few months the administration has worked on the timber aspects of the President's anti-inflation program. Federal policy on harvesting old-growth sawtimber stands in the Western National Forests may seem far removed from Michigan's forestry planning--but believe me, it is not. Federal policy on improving the productivity of non-industrial private forests--and using the timber harvested--is also a major factor in state planning.

The demand for non-timber resources from public lands is increasing. Increasing the productivity of non-industrial private forests and further improvements in using the timber harvested can take some of the pressure for timber off federal lands, allowing uses which greater emphasize non-timber values. Non-industrial private forests also can provide the public with non-timber forest values through multiple use management, while at the same time providing more timber.

As forestry leaders in any state go about developing a comprehensive state forestry plan they must adopt certain policies, assumptions, and goals as the basis for setting priorities and targets. Some hard decisions are necessary. For example, should Michigan strive to be self-sufficient in meeting its prospective wood needs? Should the state be a net exporter of timber? Or should the forests of Michigan be used primarily for recreation, second-home sites, wildlife sanctuaries, and hunting preserves--and the state's timber requirements be met largely from imports from Canada and other states?

Federal participation, through international, national, and regional analyses, plus data gathering at the state level, are vital to balanced and informed state decisionmaking processes. Many USDA programs are aimed at doing that.

Our Forest Survey (Renewable Resources Evaluation, as we now call it) and soils mapping by SCS are two illustrations of specific, on-site information provided to the states. Extension's capacity for public policy education and its ability to involve people in group decisionmaking is ideal to taking advantage of the resource information generated by other agencies.

Our federal agencies also can help to create a productive atmosphere of cooperation and coordination. One of my main interests has been to replace agency "turf-guarding" of the past with an environment conducive to working together. I can think of no better opportunity for cooperation than developing a statewide forest resources plan. There are so many interested parties, so many alternatives, activities, and opportunities here, that no other approach can possibly succeed.

One last thought with regard to the federal role. Gone are the days when a federal agency could throw dollars and people at a problem. The budget squeeze is hitting renewable natural resource programs harder than most because they are in the small part of the federal budget that is controllable. In a serious budget deficit and inflationary situation I'm afraid we must anticipate a continuing retrenchment of federal program dollars and staff in renewable resources programs. What this means is that we must get maximum effect from those things that we can still do. Assistance with comprehensive state forestry planning is one of these--and that's one reason that I'm here today.

Now, I'd like to share with you our concept of the ideal state forestry plan. What I offer is not a recipe book--but a framework of planning principles. You have all the talent you need to produce the best such plan that has ever been put together. I expect you will include certain principles and characteristics in your planning framework.

Even without a deliberate plan we are always in the process of change. The basic concept of planning is simplicity. It is a systematic analysis of what you have, what you want, when you want it, and how to get there.

There are at least 15 attributes or characteristics of an ideal state forestry plan.

1. Factual Foundation. There should be a ceaseless effort to bring together the best data and information that is available. There will need to be assumptions, but there should be no doubt about the accuracy and the quality of the data.

2. External Awareness. It is vitally important that state planning not take place in a vacuum. Your neighboring states, your region, your international neighbors in the case of Michigan, and even national concerns, must have a part in shaping your plans.

3. Broad Scope. I can think of nothing more futile than to plan in-depth for a single element of the forest renewable resources situation. A forestry plan must reflect the broadest interpretation of forestry.

4. All Ownerships. The forestry needs and opportunities of a state transcend ownership boundaries. In Michigan you are fortunate to have an excellent mixture of federal, state, industry, farm, and other private lands. Specific planning on any one of these segments can be strengthened if it is done in the context of a comprehensive state plan. Your experience with coordinating management of public forests and adjacent private lands is a good start.

5. Landowner Oriented. Because the bulk of the forest land in most states is owned by individuals and families, any forestry plan must reflect the objectives, interests, and wishes of those owners. There is a direct link among the interests of the landowner, the community, the county, the multi-county district, and the state--yes, and even the region and the nation. It is possible to chart a course of action that meets the needs and priorities of all of these interests. The public interest often is compatible with private interests--and a good state forestry plan can build upon those mutual benefits and opportunities.

6. User Oriented. This is a more difficult--but important challenge--to make the forestry plan fit the needs, the priorities, and the interests of those who use the forests. The paper company, the farmer, the camper, the hunter, the bird watcher, the snowmobiler, the person who just enjoys knowing that well-managed forests are out there, all have a legitimate interest in shaping the state plan.

7. Widely-based Input. All of the foregoing suggest that a valid, supportable forestry plan must have the benefit of inputs from a great variety of people and organizations. A plan put together by a few people--laboring in an ivory tower or in the state capitol or elsewhere--has two chances of success--poor and none!

8. Public Involvement. As the plan takes shape, there is much to be gained by adequate public involvement. It takes time and patience and hard work--but is essential if the plan is to be supported and understood.

9. Flexible and Dynamic. There is nothing to be gained by carving the forestry plan in stone--even after the public involvement, the coordination, and other factors are accounted for. There are just too many uncertainties. We have seen tent campers convert to trailers, for example, and from them to pick-ups and now motor homes that are more luxurious than many apartments. We have seen hiking and horseback riding replaced in part by motor bikes and snowmobiles. We have seen fewer local people in our forests and more out-of-state passers-through. And now the energy crisis may swing the pendulum back the other way.

We have seen demands for wood rise sharply in areas where conversions from oil and gas are taking place. Fuelwood prices are skyrocketing--and the pot-bellied, wood-burning stove is seen again in the land of thermostats and electric blankets. If and when the cost of gasoline exceeds \$2 per gallon--as it now does in Europe and Japan--what will that do to a forest strategy that is based on 1975 thinking and data?

10. Imaginative and Innovative. The state forestry plan should reflect forward-looking thinking. The minds here in this room today could devise a multi-faceted solution to a combination of forest related problems. For example, we know that forest lands are being used to help dispose of waste water. Using forests as a tertiary treatment of effluents from sewage disposal systems is very effective. The phosphorous and other nutrients are taken up by the forest soils and the purified waters can recharge the ground waters.

At the same time, researchers are looking at energy plantations, "sycamore silage," whole tree harvesting, soil nutrient losses, and all the rest. Perhaps all of this can be reflected in a dynamic, integrated, comprehensive forestry plan for the state that will respond to emerging needs and technology--with specific solutions for specific problems.

11. Specific in Content. Perhaps the most difficult challenge of state forestry planning is to get away from generalities and down to specifics, without being swamped in details. There is a need for a general framework. But there also is a need for detailed activities to implement the plan. We need enough specificity to make the plan a significant document.

Two illustrations come to mind. We all know that joint actions by owners of small tracts of forest lands can achieve economies of scale and other benefits. Aggregations of holdings for coordinated management and mutual assistance are rare in American forestry. Such a group in Mississippi was established as a demonstration project of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Through a cooperative effort, aided by the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the Forest Service, USDA, they have improved their timber-growing capabilities and their markets. The 94 members have holdings totalling about 50,000 acres of forest.

We also know that wood can produce energy. More than 100 buildings in downtown Concord, New Hampshire, were kept warm this winter in part because the steam company is burning sawdust to reduce oil consumption. An estimated 12,000 barrels will be saved and a solid waste disposal problem is solved.

Both these things happened because somebody took a good idea and got specific about making something happen.

12. Targeted and Accountable. One way to make the Forestry plan meaningful is to set specific targets for accomplishments on a scheduled basis. The plan should lay out a sequence of activities which lead to measurable outputs over a set period of time. Those targets should be considered both a commitment of resources and an accountable contract against which to measure accomplishment.

13. Implementable and Realistic. There is not much value in a state forestry plan that promises or schedules more than can be done. Objectives, goals, and targets must be negotiated on the basis of reasonable expectations of what can be accomplished with the resources available.

14. Action Oriented. A key feature of the final product should be a specific action plan. Answers to the questions who should do what, when, and how to implement the plan must be provided. If this is not a part of the plan itself it should be a prompt follow-up document. One way is to have an annual action plan that can be updated within the framework of the multi-year plan or program. This can help to make the plan a living document, an evolving statement of purpose and direction aimed toward the long-range goals of the state.

15. Multi Purpose. Lastly, the plan should serve a variety of purposes and reflect a variety of resources. It should be the basis for the state's input to the RPA process, specifically the shaping of the cooperative forestry programs of the Forest Service. It should provide forestry input to the RCA and the shaping of the USDA soil and water program. It should provide the framework, if not the substance, for the state's implementation of the forestry aspects of the Renewable Resources Extension Act. It should provide the basis for consolidation of payments under Section 9 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act--if the state opts to use that approach. It should provide a framework for the on-going activities of the State Forestry Planning Committee. It should provide a budget framework for the state legislature that will assure coordinated and balanced implementation of the full array of individual forestry activities or programs. It should be made useful to forest industries, consulting foresters, and others who need to know "where the state is coming from" in forestry matters. It needs to be a stand-alone forestry plan--and yet be complementary to other renewable resources plans or programs that are on-going--wildlife, water quality, recreation, energy production, and so forth.

Let me give you one last example--this one based on an "outside" group looking into government activities related to planning.

In January of this year, the Wildlife Management Institute reported on a detailed evaluation of Forest Service fish and wildlife programs. They visited 36 Supervisors Offices, 93 Ranger Districts, and interviewed 77 state wildlife agency employees. A major section of the report is entitled "state cooperation." Several conclusions were reached. One of the key findings is that the Forest Service, State Foresters, and Directors of state wildlife and fish agencies should cooperate closely in comprehensive forest planning. This is an obvious but seldom achieved objective.

In conclusion, let me simply state the obvious--you have accepted an exciting and an important challenge. As you set out to construct your statewide forest resources plan you have the best wishes--and the promise of help--from your colleagues in the Department of Agriculture.

You also should know our expectation: that you will, in fact, produce an ideal state forestry plan. We wish you well. We look forward to your success. We congratulate you on your leadership.

Thank you.

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